

## Deep Strike Tribune – 2-20 FA – From the Battalion Commander – Feb 2006

By the time you receive this, we will have passed the two month mark for our time here “in theater”, so for those who look at things from a “glass half empty” approach that’s two months of the deployment already done!

Let me begin this month’s newsletter by saying “thanks” to those of you on the home front for holding the fort down while we’re away. Thanks for juggling the many aspects of every day life that are all the more challenging when your loved one is not there to lend a hand or be there in person to provide support. Thanks also for the many letters, cards, packages and e-mails that you have sent to our Soldiers. Thanks also for helping each other out when necessary, and thanks to the volunteers in our Family Readiness Groups (FRG) – your contributions are immeasurable and efforts truly appreciated.

I’d also like to make a public service announcement to remind people that our FRGs are comprised wholly of volunteers (spouses or family members) who give of their time to help ensure our families stay informed and serve as a support group. Remember that our FRGs are only as strong and viable as those who volunteer to participate in the FRG – whether that’s as an active volunteer or simply by attending the FRG meetings and staying in contact with one another. I’d ask that wherever possible, if you’re able to help with your FRG, please do so – the more people that help out reduces the burden for the few that have volunteered their time and efforts.

What’s the news from here? It’s been a busy couple of months, and we’ve adjusted to our surroundings and the mission and demands placed on us. While the winter here is not a snowy one, the weather is frequently rainy and cool (and sometimes downright cold). We’ve had everything from torrential downpours to dust storms. The one constant seems to be either mud or dust. There’s no complaining about the weather though, as it will soon enough be days of 100 degree plus temperatures, so we’re enjoying the relatively less brutal weather. Despite the rain and mud, our Soldiers have gone about their mission with gusto and risen to every challenge facing them...

B Battery also demonstrated its mettle when it was called upon to move to another location, and did so with true professionalism and had many junior leaders step forward to ensure a smooth and successful move. Our mission dictated that part of B Battery move to another location, so some of our Soldiers already have a new place to temporarily call “home”. I’ve recently visited the Soldiers at the new location and they’re doing great and already making a name for themselves at their new site. Knowing the capabilities that the unit brings to the fight, their reception when they arrived was practically one of being “rock stars”.

One of the first questions some will have is *why did these Soldiers move?* The simple answer is that the mission called for them to be positioned where they might best be able to fire rockets and missiles in support of coalition forces. *Will this be the last time the unit moves? Will this be the only unit that moves?* I have no answer to either one of those questions at this point – but this is all a part of what we do, and in each instance is undertaken so that we’re located where we can best conduct the mission for which we deployed here to accomplish. *How will this move impact the Soldier’s mail?* The bottom line is that it will most likely take anywhere from 4-6 days longer for the Soldiers to get their mail at this new location. Right now we’re not looking for the Soldiers to get a new mailing address, and we’ll simply forward the mail from their previous location to their new location (so keep those letters, cards, and packages coming with full confidence that they’ll get it)...

The Soldiers of HHS Battery, 67th FSC, and B Battery (those who didn't move) will hopefully be moving into new living areas by the end of the month (weather permitting). Soldiers are eagerly looking forward to moving into the 10' x 20' containerized housing units, affectionately called CHUs (remember, everything in the military has to have an acronym). Our Soldiers will live two to a CHU, and it will be a marked improvement over the somewhat dilapidated buildings most are currently living in. The recent heavy rains resulted in one of the barracks buildings being flooded, and our 67th FSC Soldiers had to make an emergency move to another drier building, so the move to the CHUs will be a welcome one as they are located where flooding will not be an issue. The B Battery Soldiers who moved are living in two large tents... but they are far from the pup-tent variety campers might be used to. Our Soldiers have truly outfitted the tents with relative comforts of home – to include partitioning off areas almost into mini-apartments within the tent. Although A Battery still resides in the more austere location in the battalion, I was truly impressed with the improvements they have made when I last visited them. The creative talent of some of our Soldiers is truly amazing, and given what I saw the carpenters and electricians of "Extreme Makeover – Home Edition" better look out!

I'm often asked "what do you guys need"? That's honestly a challenging question, as everyone's needs are somewhat unique – so I have to defer that question to each individual Soldier. These needs will also change as the weather changes, and the environment become harsher with the rising temperatures. I'd like to thank though those who have either individually sent things, or who have coordinated to have things sent over – everything has been most appreciated and put to use. I've learned to be careful about asking for things, because the outpouring of support can truly be awe-inspiring. I mentioned to my wife that Soldiers were looking for microwave popcorn so that when we hold "movie-nights" as a break from the action we could have something to snack on and the next thing I know is she got 40 cases of popcorn from manufacturers to send! Now, if we can only figure a way to get that over here...

LTC Mark D. Johnson  
Deep Strike 6

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## **Battalion Chaplain**

Dear Deep Strike Family,

How have you been? WE REALLY MISS YOU!! We're fine and are doing great with the constant support of your daily prayers.

The reflection of my Chaplaincy every day being among Soldiers here: "What an honorable privilege with them!" We have lot of young Soldiers. They are really ordinary young men and women, but make extraordinary things happen everyday. Let me share some my experiences. The last two weeks I was with Alpha soldiers; They are far away remote from the rest of Battalion Soldiers. It was rough, with minimal modern-day comforts. They are in the middle of the desert. The desert in winter is chilly, dusty, and icy with wind all day and night long. My main ministry is to boost their morale. I have great appreciation for the great job they do every day: they are doing convoys, patrols, fire missions, maintenance, cooking, fueling, laundry, etc.

We have been told "There is no atheist in a fox hole." Holding hands and praying together with them, I repeat numerously in my heart to them: CHEER UP GUYS!! GOD IS WITH YOU!! One Soldier said to me, "It is a good time to reflect in my life. When I get back home, I am going to hold my wife's hands all day long every day. I am not going to let her alone any more." It sounds great, doesn't it?

Separation is painful, but it gives us a lot of lesson. We get a chance to consider our future, our marriage, parenting, and Soldiering also. I want to ask you: How have you been, family? We are great; and becoming a man and woman who we want to be as a son, a daughter, a husband, a wife, a daddy, or a mommy.

I recall one passage of the Bible, "Cheer up, men! I believe God." (Acts 27:25/Moffatt) These words come out of a situation where shipwreck and death stared at Paul, the sailors, and their captain. On that ship was trouble, hatred, persecution, uncertainty, and hopelessness. Paul said to his comrades, "Cheer up, men!" With our faith we can bear anything, face anything, and endure anything. "CHEER UP, Deep Strike Family! We believe GOD!"

Blessings,

Chaplain Sang Lee  
*Deep Strike Chaplain*

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